

ANNEX 2: Terms of Reference

A. Project title

Institutionalisation of management effectiveness tracking for adaptive management and national biodiversity reporting in protected areas in Montenegro

B. Project Description

1. Context and Rationale

Montenegro has established a national network of protected areas that includes national parks, nature parks, area of exceptional features, nature monuments, and other categories of protected areas managed by a range of institutions at national and local levels. While management structures and management planning systems are in place for most protected areas, there is currently no standardised national system for assessing, tracking, and improving the effectiveness of protected area management across the network.

Management effectiveness assessment is increasingly recognised as a key component of protected area governance and adaptive management. Internationally, it is used not only to evaluate whether protected areas have appropriate management systems in place, but also to assess whether management interventions are effectively contributing to the conservation of biodiversity, habitats, and ecosystem services. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) specifically recognise the importance of management effectiveness as an indicator of protected area performance and progress towards biodiversity targets.

The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) is currently the most widely applied protected area management effectiveness assessment methodology globally. Developed within the framework of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Framework for Assessing Management Effectiveness, METT provides a practical and standardised approach for evaluating key aspects of protected area management, including planning, governance, resources, implementation, monitoring, and management outcomes. The latest version, METT-4, reflects international good practice and is increasingly used by governments, protected area authorities, and international conservation organisations as a tool for both site-level management improvement and national-level reporting.

In Montenegro, management effectiveness assessments have been carried out only sporadically, primarily within the framework of donor-funded projects. While these assessments have provided useful insights into management strengths and weaknesses in individual protected areas, they have not been conducted systematically, nor have they been embedded within a national framework that would ensure regular implementation, comparability of results, institutional ownership, and long-term continuity. As a result, Montenegro currently lacks a coherent system for tracking management effectiveness across the protected area network, aggregating results at the national level, and using the findings to inform management decisions, policy development, biodiversity monitoring, and reporting.

Recognising this gap, the GEF-7 project has supported the development of national *Guidelines for Protected Area Management Effectiveness Assessment*. These guidelines reviewed available methodologies and recommended METT as the most practical and suitable approach for Montenegro at the current stage of development, taking into account existing institutional capacities, reporting requirements, and the need for a cost-effective and scalable system that can be applied across all protected areas.

Building on this foundation, there is now a need to operationalise and institutionalise management effectiveness assessment within Montenegro's protected area system. This includes establishing the necessary procedures, institutional arrangements, reporting mechanisms, and capacities to enable regular implementation of METT assessments, consistent collection and management of data, aggregation of results at the national level, and

integration of management effectiveness information into adaptive management processes, biodiversity monitoring systems, implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), and reporting under the CBD and GBF.

The purpose of this assignment is therefore to support the introduction of a national management effectiveness assessment system based on METT, strengthen the capacities of protected area managers and relevant institutions, conduct the first coordinated baseline assessment across the protected area network, and establish the foundations for long-term monitoring and continuous improvement of protected area management effectiveness in Montenegro.

2. Overall Objective of the Project

Overall Objective

To establish the foundations for a sustainable, standardised, and institutionalised national system for assessing, monitoring, and improving protected area management effectiveness in Montenegro, based on the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), thereby strengthening adaptive management, supporting implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), and contributing to national and international biodiversity reporting obligations.

Specific Objectives

- Strengthen the capacities of protected area managers and relevant national institutions to apply management effectiveness assessments and use the results for adaptive management, planning, decision-making, and reporting.
- Conduct a baseline management effectiveness assessment across Montenegro's protected area network using the METT methodology, establishing a reference point for future monitoring and evaluation.
- Develop and formalise a standardised national framework for METT implementation, including methodologies, standard operating procedures, institutional roles and responsibilities, reporting cycles, and quality assurance mechanisms.
- Establish a national system for collection, management, aggregation, and analysis of management effectiveness data, enabling assessment of both protected area-level and national-level performance.
- Integrate management effectiveness assessment into national biodiversity monitoring, NBSAP implementation, and reporting processes under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).
- Strengthen the use of management effectiveness results for adaptive management by linking assessment findings to protected area management planning, implementation of annual management programmes and management plans, periodic (annual and five-year) reporting cycles, prioritisation of conservation actions, resource allocation, and continuous improvement of protected area management.
- Identify institutional, technical, human resource, and financial capacity needs and develop recommendations and a roadmap for the long-term institutionalisation and sustainability of the national management effectiveness assessment system.
- Develop recommendations for the digitalisation of management effectiveness assessments and their integration with national environmental information and reporting systems.
- Develop recommendations and methodological guidance for applying management effectiveness assessment approaches to Montenegro's future ecological network and other conservation areas, as well as linking METT with other effectiveness tools and approaches

C. Scope of Work

The selected Service Provider (Company) shall be responsible for providing overall technical leadership, coordination, and quality assurance for the following tasks:

Inception and System Design Phase

The Service Provider shall review existing legislation, institutional arrangements, protected area management systems, relevant national policies, and *the Guidelines on Protected Area Management Effectiveness* developed under the GEF-7 project. Based on this review, the Service Provider shall develop a methodology and implementation approach for establishing a national management effectiveness assessment system.

This phase shall include:

- analysis of existing institutional arrangements and management effectiveness assessment practices;
- identification of key stakeholders and institutional responsibilities;
- development of a methodology for national-level implementation of METT;
- development of a work plan and implementation roadmap for the assignment.

Capacity Building and Awareness Raising Phase

The Service Provider shall strengthen the capacities of protected area managers, relevant national institutions, and the national Coordinating Body for Protected Areas on management effectiveness assessment and its role in adaptive management.

This phase shall include:

- development of training materials and guidance documents;
- delivery of training programmes on the METT methodology and its practical application;
- training on the integration of management effectiveness assessments into annual management programmes, five-year management plans, periodic reporting on implementation of management plans, and adaptive management processes;
- capacity building for national institutions on the use of management effectiveness results for biodiversity policy implementation, NBSAP monitoring, and national and international reporting
- in conducting capacity building and awareness raising activities, the Service Provider will apply a gender-responsive approach

Baseline Assessment Phase

The Service Provider shall conduct the first coordinated baseline management effectiveness assessment across Montenegro's protected area network using the METT methodology.

This phase shall include:

- coordination and facilitation of assessments with protected area managers;
- collection and validation of assessment data;
- analysis of management effectiveness results at individual protected area level;
- aggregation and analysis of results at national level, based on the developed methodology
- identification of key management strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and priority areas for improvement.

Development of National Management Effectiveness System

Building on the baseline assessment and capacity-building activities, the Service Provider shall establish the operational framework for long-term implementation of management effectiveness assessments in Montenegro.

This phase shall include:

- development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for METT implementation;
- definition of institutional roles and responsibilities for data collection, reporting, verification, and quality assurance;
- establishment of reporting cycles, timelines, and procedures;
- development of data management, storage, and consolidation procedures;
- establishment of a national-level system for aggregation of site-level results into national indicators and analyses

- development of procedures for linking management effectiveness assessments with annual and five-year reporting on implementation of protected area management plans and annual management programmes;
- development of guidance for the use of management effectiveness assessments in evaluating implementation progress, management performance, and achievement of management objectives;

Reporting, Integration, and Adaptive Management Framework

The Service Provider shall ensure that management effectiveness assessment results can be systematically used for management, policy-making, and reporting purposes.

This phase shall include:

- development of methodologies, templates, and reporting formats for national reporting;
- alignment of management effectiveness reporting with CBD, GBF, and NBSAP monitoring and reporting frameworks;
- development of guidance on the use of METT results for adaptive management, including preparation and revision of management plans, implementation of annual management programmes, periodic reporting on management plan implementation, prioritisation of actions, budgeting, and resource allocation
- development of a framework for integrating management effectiveness assessments with biodiversity monitoring, ecosystem monitoring, and other relevant national information systems.

Institutionalisation and Sustainability Phase

The Service Provider shall develop recommendations and practical measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of the management effectiveness assessment system.

This phase shall include:

- assessment of institutional, technical, human resource, and financial capacity needs;
- development of a targeted capacity-building programme for long-term implementation;
- preparation of a roadmap for institutionalisation of the METT system, including legal, institutional, operational, and financial requirements;
- development of recommendations for digitalisation of METT processes, including databases, reporting platforms, data exchange systems, and integration with national environmental information systems;
- development of recommendations and methodological guidance for future application of management effectiveness assessment approaches in ecological network
- development and recommendations on linking METT process and results with other management effectiveness tools and approaches (such as PAME EU)
- development of mechanisms for periodic review, learning, feedback, and continuous improvement of the system.

D. Expected Outputs and Deliverables

The Service Provider shall deliver the outputs and specific deliverables listed below in a logical sequence aligned with the process. Indicative timeframes are expressed as periods counted from the date of contract signing. Exact dates shall be confirmed in the approved Inception Report. All deliverables shall be subject to technical review and validation by the Implementing Entity and formal contractual acceptance in accordance with the agreed institutional arrangements.

Deliverable / Output	Description	Indicative Timing	Review and Approval
Inception Report	Review of existing legislation, institutional arrangements, management effectiveness practices, and relevant policies; methodology for national METT implementation; stakeholder mapping; implementation approach; detailed work plan and roadmap for the assignment.	Within 1 month of contract signature	Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development
Training Materials and Capacity Building Package	Training curriculum, presentations, guidance materials, manuals, and supporting resources for protected area managers, national institutions, and the Coordinating Body.	Within 3 months of contract signature	Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development
Baseline Protected Area Management Effectiveness Assessment Report	Results of the first coordinated national METT assessment, including completed assessments, analysis of management effectiveness at site level, national aggregation of results, identification of strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and priority areas for improvement.	Within 4 months of contract signature	Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development
National Management Effectiveness Assessment Framework	Draft operational framework for long-term implementation of METT, including Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), institutional roles and responsibilities, reporting cycles, quality assurance procedures, data management protocols, and methodology for aggregation of site-level results into national indicators.	Within 4 months of contract signature	Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development
Capacity Building Report	Report documenting capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, including participants, training content delivered, results achieved, lessons learned, and gender-disaggregated participation statistics.	Within 4 months of contract signature	Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development
Reporting and Adaptive Management Framework	Methodologies, templates, reporting formats, guidance for national reporting, alignment with CBD, GBF and NBSAP reporting requirements, and guidance for using METT results in adaptive management, planning, budgeting, and prioritisation.	Within 5 months of contract signature	Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development
Institutionalisation, Digitalisation and Sustainability Roadmap	Assessment of institutional, technical, human resource and financial needs; long-term capacity development programme; roadmap for institutionalisation of the METT system; recommendations for digitalisation, data exchange, integration with environmental information systems, application to ecological network, compatibility with other management effectiveness tracking tools and continuous improvement mechanisms.	Within 5 months of contract signature	Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development
Final National METT System Package and Final Report	Package and Final Report Consolidated final package incorporating all comments, including final management effectiveness assessment report, national METT implementation framework, SOPs, reporting framework, sustainability roadmap, digitalisation recommendations, and summary of key recommendations for long-term implementation.	Within 6 months of contract signature	Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development

Total estimated duration: 6 months

D.2 Quality Standards

All deliverables shall:

- Be prepared in Montenegrin (unless otherwise agreed);
- Integrate inputs from international and national experts into a single coherent proposal

D.3 Review and Acceptance

Each deliverable shall be reviewed within an indicative period of up to ten (10) working days following submission. The Company shall address comments and revise deliverables within timeframes agreed with the IP. Formal acceptance of deliverables shall be confirmed in writing by the designated approving authority.

E. Institutional Arrangement

Institutional oversight and reporting lines

The contract shall be administered and managed by Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region, which shall retain overall contractual authority, including contract supervision, performance monitoring, and formal acceptance of deliverables.

All key deliverables shall be subject to joint review by Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region and UNDP, with final contractual acceptance and payment authorization resting with Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region.

Contractor Management Structure

The Company shall designate a Project Manager who shall serve as the primary operational point of contact with IP. The Project Manager shall be responsible for:

- overall coordination of project activities;
 - day-to-day communication with stakeholders;
 - monitoring implementation progress;
 - ensuring timely delivery of outputs;
 - quality assurance of all deliverables.

The Company shall establish an appropriately qualified Project Team responsible for the execution of technical and substantive tasks under this assignment.

Progress Reporting

The Company shall submit monthly progress reports to IP.

Each report shall include, at a minimum:

- summary of activities performed;
- progress against milestones;
- risks and challenges encountered;
- mitigation measures;
- planned activities for the next reporting period.

IP may request ad-hoc briefings or presentations on project progress as required.

F. Duration of the Work

a) Duration of the assignment

The assignment is expected to be implemented over a fixed-term period, with a clearly defined start and end date, and an estimated overall duration of approximately 6 months, taking into account the scope, complexity and phased delivery of outputs.

b) Start date and expected completion

The assignment is expected to commence within two (2) weeks of contract signing, subject to the completion of contractual formalities and the availability of initial inputs and documentation.

The expected completion date is set at approximately 6 months from the commencement date, in line with the agreed scope of work and the phased delivery of outputs.

Any adjustments to the start date or completion timeline may be agreed in writing between IP and the Company where external factors — such as delays in data availability, regulatory changes or force majeure events — materially affect the implementation schedule.

c) Review, feedback and acceptance of deliverables

For each deliverable submitted under the assignment, an estimated review and approval period of up to ten (10) working days shall apply.

During this period, UNDP may provide comments, requests for clarification or requests for revisions. The Company shall address such comments within a timeframe to be agreed with the Project Implementing Partner. Formal acceptance of each deliverable shall be confirmed in writing by the designated approving authority.

d) Time sensitivity and implications of delays

The assignment is considered time-sensitive.

Any significant delay in the completion of the assignment may adversely affect the sequencing of subsequent project phases, the timely achievement of regulatory objectives, and the overall effectiveness of supervisory processes.

H. Qualifications of the Successful Individual Company

The selected Company must demonstrate the technical, organizational, and financial capacity required to successfully lead and coordinate the preparation of an financial plans in accordance with the ToR standards.

H.1 Corporate Registration and Relevant Experience

The Company must be a legally registered entity authorized to provide professional consulting services in fields relevant to biodiversity conservation and finance, climate change adaptation, climate finance, disaster risk reduction, environmental and social safeguards, or related disciplines.

H.2 Technical and Organizational Capacity

The Company shall demonstrate strong technical leadership, coordination, and delivery capacity for complex, multi-component assignments related to biodiversity conservation, ecosystem management, nature protection planning, and sustainable natural resource management. This includes:

- Proven ability to manage and deliver multidisciplinary assignments involving biodiversity planning, ecosystem conservation and restoration, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and institutional coordination;
- Experience coordinating teams of international and national experts, ensuring effective collaboration and timely delivery of outputs;
- Demonstrated capacity to lead participatory processes involving public institutions, protected area managers, local communities, private sector actors, academia, and civil society organisations;
- Strong project management and organisational skills, including the ability to deliver high-quality outputs within defined timelines;
- Established internal quality assurance mechanisms to ensure consistency, methodological rigour, and technical soundness of all deliverables.

The Company must demonstrate in-house expertise or access to qualified experts in the following areas:

Multidisciplinary knowledge in the fields of:

- Protected area management and governance, including management planning, implementation, monitoring, and adaptive management approaches;
- Management effectiveness assessment of protected areas, including practical application of internationally recognised methodologies and frameworks;
- Biodiversity conservation and nature protection policy, including protected area systems and their role in achieving national and international biodiversity targets;
- Environmental monitoring, performance assessment, indicator development, and reporting systems;
- Institutional development and governance, including design of operational procedures, coordination mechanisms, and institutional workflows;
- Capacity development, adult learning methodologies, training design, and facilitation;

- Environmental information management, data systems, and digitalisation of monitoring and reporting processes.

Previous experience in preparing:

- Protected area management effectiveness assessments using METT or other internationally recognised methodologies such as PAME, RAPPAM, Green List, or similar tools;
- National or regional systems, frameworks, or methodologies for environmental, biodiversity, or protected area monitoring and reporting;
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs), operational guidelines, institutional protocols, and data management workflows;
- Capacity-building programmes, training curricula, manuals, and guidance materials for public institutions and protected area managers;
- Strategic, policy, and technical documents related to protected area management, biodiversity conservation, environmental governance, or institutional strengthening;
- Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting frameworks, including indicator-based assessment systems.

Familiarity with:

- International biodiversity and protected area policy frameworks, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), and related reporting requirements;
- EU nature policy and relevant acquis, including the Birds and Habitats Directives, Natura 2000, and protected area management standards;
- National biodiversity, nature protection, and protected area governance frameworks in Montenegro;
- Adaptive management principles and their application in protected area planning and decision-making processes;
- Institutional arrangements and governance structures for protected area management at national and local levels;
- Biodiversity monitoring, reporting, and assessment systems used for national and international reporting.

Technical expertise:

- Demonstrated practical experience in applying METT or comparable management effectiveness assessment methodologies;
- Ability to design and operationalise management effectiveness assessment systems at both site and national levels;
- Experience in developing institutional frameworks, SOPs, reporting procedures, and data workflows for monitoring and reporting systems;
- Experience in conducting capacity needs assessments and designing targeted capacity-building programmes;
- Ability to develop methodologies, indicators, reporting templates, and aggregation approaches for national-level analysis and reporting;
- Experience in integrating assessment results into adaptive management, policy development, planning, budgeting, and decision-making processes;
- Experience in designing and facilitating workshops, training programmes, and stakeholder consultations;
- Experience in development or digitalisation of environmental databases, reporting platforms, data exchange systems, and environmental information systems;
- Experience working in Montenegro or the Western Balkans region shall be considered an asset.

H.3 Human Resources and Key Personnel

The Company shall propose a core expert team, contracted under the Company, at a minimum including:

Team Leader / Protected Area Governance and Management Expert

The Team Leader shall be responsible for overall coordination of the assignment, quality assurance of outputs, stakeholder engagement, and supervision of the expert team.

Required expertise:

- Extensive experience in protected area governance and management systems;
- Strong understanding of adaptive management principles and their application in protected area planning and decision-making;
- Experience in biodiversity policy, institutional development, and environmental governance;
- Proven experience in leading similar assignments involving multiple institutions and stakeholders.

Protected Area Management Effectiveness Expert

The Expert shall lead the technical design and implementation of the management effectiveness assessment system and provide guidance on the application of METT.

Required expertise:

- Demonstrated practical experience with METT and/or other internationally recognised management effectiveness assessment methodologies (e.g. PAME, RAPPAM, Green List);
- Experience in conducting protected area management effectiveness assessments;
- Experience in development of assessment methodologies, indicators, reporting systems, and adaptive management frameworks.

Capacity Building and Training Expert

The Expert shall support the development and delivery of capacity-building activities and training programmes.

Required expertise:

- Experience in institutional capacity development and organisational strengthening;
- Experience in designing and delivering training programmes, workshops, and adult learning processes;
- Experience in preparation of training materials, guidance documents, and facilitation tools.

Data and Information Systems Expert

The Expert shall support the design of data management, reporting, and digitalisation components of the national system.

Required expertise:

- Experience in environmental databases, monitoring systems, reporting platforms, and data management workflows;
- Experience in development of digital information systems and data exchange protocols;
- Understanding of environmental reporting and information management processes.

Optional Experts

Depending on the proposed methodology, the Company may include additional experts such as:

- Biodiversity Monitoring and Indicators Expert;
- Environmental Data and GIS Specialist;
- Biodiversity Policy and Legal Expert;
- Institutional Development and Governance Expert;
- Environmental Information Systems and Digitalisation Specialist;
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Expert;
- Protected Area Finance and Resource Mobilisation Expert;
- Facilitator / Stakeholder Engagement Specialist.

Minimum Qualifications of Key Experts

Education

All key experts shall possess:

- A university degree (minimum Bachelor's degree) in a relevant field such as biology, ecology, environmental sciences, forestry, geography, natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, environmental policy, public administration, information systems, education, or related disciplines.

The Team Leader should preferably hold an advanced university degree (Master's or PhD degree) in a relevant discipline.

Professional Experience

- Team Leader: minimum 7 years of relevant professional experience;
- Other key experts: minimum 5 years of relevant professional experience.

Relevant experience shall include:

- Protected area management and governance;
- Biodiversity conservation and environmental management;
- Institutional strengthening and system development;
- Development of monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems;
- Capacity building and stakeholder engagement;
- Preparation of technical, strategic, and policy documents.

Skills and Competencies (Mandatory)

- Excellent analytical and report-writing skills;
- Demonstrated ability to work in multidisciplinary teams;
- Experience working with government institutions, protected area managers, and other stakeholders;
- Strong communication, facilitation, and presentation skills;
- Ability to deliver high-quality outputs within agreed timelines;
- Excellent command of written and spoken English.

Additional Qualifications Considered an Asset

The following qualifications and experience will be considered an advantage:

- Direct experience with METT-4 implementation;
- Experience with other management effectiveness assessment systems (PAME, RAPPAM, Green List, etc.);
- Specialist certifications or relevance to this ToR
- Experience supporting CBD, GBF, or NBSAP implementation and reporting;
- Experience in designing national environmental or biodiversity monitoring systems;
- Experience in development of SOPs, institutional protocols, and data workflows;
- Experience in digitalisation of environmental information systems and reporting platforms;
- Experience in protected area financing, budgeting, and resource mobilisation;
- Previous professional experience in Montenegro or the Western Balkans region;
- Familiarity with EU nature legislation, Natura 2000 processes, and protected area governance standards;
- Experience working on GEF, UNDP, EU, or other international biodiversity and protected area projects.

The Company shall demonstrate its capacity to ensure continuity of services throughout the contract period. Where third-party experts or short-term consultants are engaged, the Company shall retain full responsibility for coordination, quality, and timely delivery of outputs.

H.4 Financial and Legal Capacity

The Company must demonstrate adequate financial and legal standing to perform the contract, in accordance with applicable procurement requirements. Documentary evidence of financial capacity and legal eligibility shall be provided as part of the proposal submission.

The Company must not be subject to any legal, financial, or contractual restrictions that would prevent it from fulfilling the obligations under this assignment.

H.5 Ethical Standards and Compliance

The Company shall comply with applicable ethical standards, including:

- Integrity and transparency in professional conduct;
- Absence of conflicts of interest;
- Commitment to gender equality, inclusiveness, and respect for environmental and social safeguards.

The Company shall confirm its willingness to comply with the policies, procedures, and contractual requirements of the contracting authority and the Implementing Entity.

J. Recommended Presentation of Offer

As requested in the RFP

K. Criteria for Selection of the Best Offer

As described in the RFP